



# Washington State Department of Agriculture *Hearing Notice*

For immediate release: April 13, 2001 (01-14)  
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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

## **Hearings slated for fee increases for fruit and vegetable inspections**

OLYMPIA — To align inspection charges with practices, costs and procedures, the state Department of Agriculture proposes to increase hourly and overtime fees for inspecting fruits and vegetables. Public hearings will be held at the following times and locations:

- **Wenatchee:** 1 p.m. April 30, Washington State Apple Commission conference room, 2900 Euclid Ave.
- **Yakima:** 1 p.m. May 1, Department of Agriculture, Yakima office, 21 North First Ave.
- **Moses Lake:** 1 p.m. May 3, Shilo Inn (Exit 179 and Interstate 90), 1819 E Kittleson.

The current hourly rate is \$23 and \$31.25 for overtime hours. Proposed fees would be \$23.66 for regular hourly charges on June 30 and increase to \$24.30 on July 1, the beginning of Fiscal Year 2002. The overtime hourly charge of \$31.25 per hour would rise to \$32.15 on June 30 and \$33.05 on July 1.

"These increases are being sought to help keep pace with our actual costs of providing inspection services," said Jim Quigley, program manager for the agency's Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program. Quigley noted that the new fees must conform to the mandated growth factor allowed by Initiative 601.

Platform inspections, sample taking, phytosanitary and quarantine inspections and other services are charged on an hourly basis by the agency's horticulture inspectors. Overtime charges are assessed for inspection services performed by inspectors beyond an eight-hour weekday, on Saturdays, Sundays or state holidays.

The proposed increases will not affect the current hundredweight charges that have been in effect since 1989 and will be limited to the growth factors allowed under Initiative 601. Most users of the inspection service will see no or very little increase in fees because they are charged per hundredweight (cwt.), which equal the proposed increase in hourly rate charges, Quigley explains. Staying abreast of actual hourly costs allows the state Department of Agriculture to keep pace with the fiscal growth factors (2.87 percent for FY 2001 and 2.79 percent for FY 2002) provided by Initiative 601.

For a copy of the proposed rules or to submit written comments, contact Jim Quigley, program manager, Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program, Commodity Inspection Division, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560, or phone (360) 902-1833. Comment deadline is May 5.

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